

April 19, 2010

Washington, DC - Members of the House Populist Caucus, the House Trade Working Group, and the Progressive Caucus introduced today the *American Jobs First Platform*, four pieces of legislation designed to put struggling Americans back to work and on a level playing field with workers in other countries. Caucus Chairs Bruce Braley (IA-01), Mike Michaud (ME-02), Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-07) and Lynn Woolsey (CA-06) announced the platform in a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.

"As you know, the recession has been devastating to American workers," the letter states. "Despite some recent improvements, the unemployment rate remains high and hundreds of thousands of Americans lost their jobs last year. We commend and thank you for your strong leadership during these tough economic times, but we believe that we can do more to put Americans back to work and to put them on a level playing field with workers in other countries."

"Unfortunately, free trade agreements (FTAs) like NAFTA and CAFTA have decimated the American manufacturing sector, caused the loss of millions of U.S. manufacturing jobs, and contributed to our current economic and unemployment problems. However, despite the detrimental effects of our current trade policy, both the Bush Administration and the Obama Administration have attempted to push forward with more of the same, including Bush-negotiated FTAs with Panama, Colombia, and South Korea."

The following Members signed on as supporters of the *American Jobs First Platform*: Bruce Braley (IA-01), Mike Michaud (ME-02), Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-07), Lynn Woolsey (CA-06), Peter DeFazio (OR-04), Keith Ellison (MN-05), Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC), Bob Filner (CA-51), Gene Green (TX-29), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL-02), Carolyn Kilpatrick (MI-13), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), Tim Ryan (OH-17), Dan Lipinski (IL-03), Phil Hare (IL-17), Steve Kagen (WI-08), David Loebsack (IA-01), Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01), Betty Sutton (OH-13), Larry Kissell, (NC-08), Tom Perriello (VA-05), Chellie Pingree (ME-02).

The *American Jobs First Platform* consists of the following four bills introduced in the 111th Congress that would require the United States to make an honest and comprehensive assessment of our current trade policies and set us on a path towards a new, improved model for trade agreements, reducing the trade deficit, and reinvigorating American manufacturing:

· **H.R. 3012, the *Trade Reform, Accountability, Development, and Employment (TRADE) Act*,** would require a comprehensive GAO review of existing major trade pacts and spell out what must be included in trade agreements, including core standards on labor, the environment, food and product safety, agriculture, human rights, currency anti-manipulation, national security, procurement, and investment, and also what *must not* be included in FTAs, including Buy American bans, anti-sweatshop rule bans, and new rights for foreign investors to promote offshoring. The bill also ensures strong enforcement of these standards, and would require the President to submit renegotiation plans for current trade agreements so that they include these core provisions *before* Congressional consideration of additional agreements. We believe this bill would help reverse the negative effects of job-killing trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA and would ensure that

both our current

and

future trade agreements are fair and put American workers on a level playing field.

- **H.R. 1875, the *End the Trade Deficit Act***, would establish the Emergency Commission to End the Trade Deficit to document the causes and consequences of the trade deficit and to develop a plan to eliminate the trade deficit within the next 10 years. This bill would also place a moratorium on new FTAs until the Commission has issued a final report and Congress has conducted hearings on the Commission recommendations to end the trade deficit. The elimination of the trade deficit by 2019 would support millions of additional U.S. manufacturing jobs.

- **H.R. 4692, the *National Manufacturing Strategy Act*** would require the Administration to convene an interagency Manufacturing Strategy Task Force to examine the current domestic and international environment for U.S. manufacturing and to develop a National Manufacturing Strategy that includes recommendations to sustain and increase employment, increase global competitiveness, and increase resilience to global economic trends in the U.S. manufacturing sector. This bill seeks to proactively create and sustain good American manufacturing jobs.

- **H.R. 4678, the *Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act*** would require foreign manufacturers doing business in the U.S. to identify a registered agent authorized to accept service of process on behalf of the manufacturer. Registering an agent would constitute an acceptance of jurisdiction of the state in which the agent is located.

[Read the full text of the letter to Pelosi and Hoyer here.](#)